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Good Word for CIA

In unusually strong language, President Kennedy has lowered the boom on those dealers in rumor and gossip who are constantly sniping at the CIA. This needed doing and we are glad Mr. Kennedy has done it.

The President's remarks were prompted by a question at his news conference about "stories or reports" from Saigon to the effect that the CIA has been operating on its own in South Viet Nam.

Mr. Kennedy said emphatically that these reports are "wholly untrue." The director of the CIA, he said, sits in with the Security Council and meets regularly with the President. "We have worked very closely together." The President added that he had examined the record "very carefully" and found nothing to indicate that the CIA has done anything but support policy. "It does not create policy; it attempts to execute it in those areas where it has competence and responsibility."

Mr. Kennedy then took particular note of speculative stories and reports about the recall from Saigon of John Richardson. In this connection the President said, "I can just assure you flatly that the CIA has not carried out independent activities but has operated under close control of the Director of Central Intelligence, operating with the co-operation of the National Security Council and under my instructions."

We do not suppose that this forthright statement will serve for long to silence those reporters and commentators who, for reasons of their own, try to undermine the CIA, or who let themselves be "used" by others to that end. It will be helpful, however, to remember the President's statement the next time some such irresponsible report crops up.